

## Community Services Management Information System

The Community Services Management Information System (CSMIS) is a data-sharing program that has been implemented by several homeless and social service providers in Lincoln. The program allows agencies to share data and demographic information, and to standardize eligibility for state and local programs. CSMIS provides an accurate, unduplicated count of services provided. All data-sharing is done with individual consent and in accordance with local, state, and federal confidentiality requirements.

When the U.S. Congress mandated that all Continuum of Care's across the country begin using a data management information system in 2004, the process had already begun locally. Since the mid-90's, Lincoln's Continuum of Care had struggled with defining software needs and overcoming implementation obstacles.

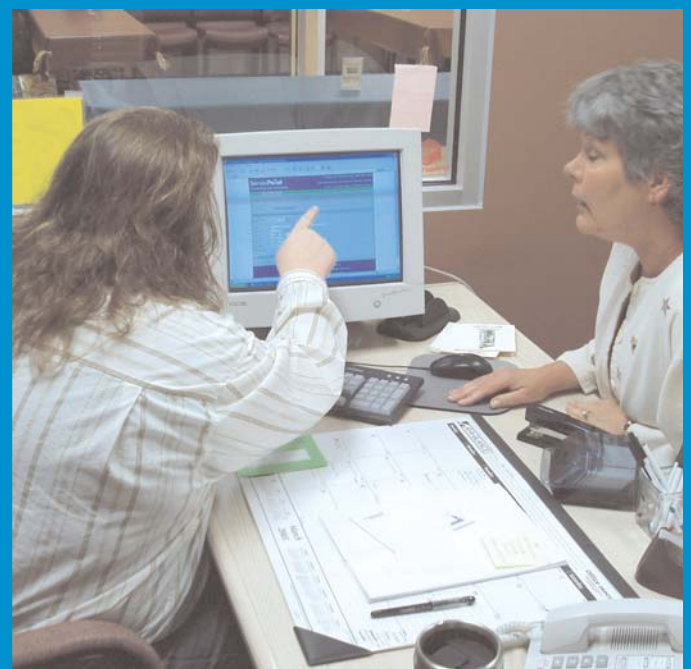
Visible progress began two years ago, when the Center on Children, Families, and the Law (CCFL) was awarded a CDBG grant to lead the effort to make CSMIS happen. A Systems Administrator, hired in December of 2003, trained staff from five agencies (Fresh Start, Cedars Youth Services, Lincoln Action Program, CenterPointe and Matt Talbot Kitchen & Outreach) in 2004. Five additional agencies (Catholic Social Services, Houses of Hope, St. Monica's and The Hub – all in Lincoln, and the Care Corps Shelter in Fremont) have now been trained. Currently, the CSMIS contains data for more than 1,000 unduplicated clients. More than 90% of the agencies that receive federal funds for homeless services are on the system.

From a client's perspective, CSMIS helps ensure they can receive all programs for which they are eligible. Because of the universal in-take form there is less "hassle" -- individuals and families only need to tell their story once.

From an agency's perspective, CSMIS provides an accurate, unduplicated picture of services that are being provided. This crucial data is used to identify needs and plan to meet those needs. An additional benefit is that sharing data between agencies strengthens case management efforts. The improved coordination of effort ultimately helps more individuals and families reach self-sufficiency.

Although CSMIS began in Lincoln, it has grown into a statewide effort. Homeless service data from Scottsbluff, Grand Island, Beatrice, and other points across the state will now all be on the same system. This will provide an accurate statewide homeless count and a statistical description of the circumstances of the homeless.

Because of the project's excellence, the CSMIS has been nominated for Lincoln's 2005 Community Development Week Award.



**For more information about other community development projects in Lincoln, contact the City's Urban Development Department, at 402-441-7606 or email: [urbandev@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:urbandev@lincoln.ne.gov)**